

## **Full statement from the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the The United Methodist Church:**

At this point, the United Methodist Church's (UMC's) official stance is that we are inclusively welcoming of all people and affirming their inherent "sacred worth," while recognizing that we all are subject to sin and all rely on the grace of God.

However, the UMC--or the majority of its international delegates at this recent special General Conference in St. Louis--has taken the position that "homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching," and thus, the church does not officially sanction marriage for same-gender couples nor ordained ministry for lesbian or gay persons. Therefore, the UMC prohibits its clergy and churches from participating in same-gender weddings and prohibits self-avowed, practicing LGBT persons from being ordained or appointed to lead churches.

We recognize and deeply regret that these prohibitions may cause great distress and alienation for many LGBTQ people and their supporters. But the majority of those who legislate and support these church laws do so on the basis of their strong, conservative adherence to biblical beliefs and religious traditions.

I might add that the balance of our traditional and progressive views and votes on this matter have been shifting over decades and may continue to do so; but it is especially complicated because of the increasingly global nature of our denomination, which includes African societies where homosexuality is not so widely accepted and may even be legally punishable.

**John W. Coleman Jr.**

*Director of Communications*